

DT 01-174

**VERIZON NEW HAMPSHIRE/CONVERSENT COMMUNICATIONS OF NEW
HAMPSHIRE**

Order Nisi Approving Interconnection Agreement

O R D E R N O. 23,812

October 19, 2001

On September 10, 2001, Verizon New England d/b/a Verizon New Hampshire and Conversent Communications of New Hampshire (Conversent) jointly filed with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (Commission) an Interconnection Agreement (Agreement). This Agreement represents an adoption of a previously negotiated agreements between Level 3 Communications, LLC and Verizon New Hampshire; Cox Rhode Island Telecom II, LLC and Verizon Rhode Island; and Fairpoint Communications Solutions Corp. and Verizon Maine; as permitted under section 252(i) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (TAct). The Agreement also includes Supplemental Agreement No. 1 filed September 10, 2001 under separate cover. The Agreement was filed for approval pursuant to section 252(e) of the TAct.

Conversent has been operating in New Hampshire for several years, having received competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) certification in Docket No. 98-094, dated September 2, 1998. Conversent's first Interconnection

Agreement was approved by this Commission on December 7, 1998.

This Agreement is a comprehensive set of terms and conditions that will facilitate the entry of Conversent as a CLEC in New Hampshire. The initial term of the agreement expires on September 30, 2002. However, absent sixty days prior written notice from either party, the Agreement remains in effect beyond the initial term. Subsequent to the initial term, the Agreement may be terminated by prior written notice from either party.

This Agreement provides, inter alia, for transmission/routing of exchange service traffic and exchange access traffic, transmission/termination of other types of traffic and joint network configuration. It further provides for unbundled access, resale, co-location, number portability, dialing parity, access to rights-of-way, access to data bases, and directory assistance service. The parties will exchange technical and traffic information which will be kept proprietary; each party will maintain facilities within its own network and will not interfere with the other party's systems.

The parties agree to jointly engineer, plan and operate a diverse transmission system with which they will interconnect their respective networks. The Agreement

specifies the designation of interconnection points, provides for a joint grooming plan, and provides for the physical interface of facilities.

The interoffice facilities are priced on an unbundled basis to allow for use with other unbundled network elements, thus creating numerous facilities-based and/or resale options to Conversent in the provisioning of exchange and exchange access services. The Agreement also includes detailed unbundling of local outside plant and central office facilities that would allow Conversent to provide digital and other high-tech services without extensive revisions to the Agreement.

Prices in this filing are virtually the same as those in previously approved non-cellular interconnection agreements adopted in New Hampshire for the services/elements that are common. Staff points out that the TAct does not require that a telecommunications company sell each service/element for the same price or terms to each requesting party.

The Commission Staff has recommended approval of the Agreement between Conversent and Verizon based upon a review of the petition and the Agreement.

We have reviewed the filing and find it meets the

standards of section 252(e)(2)(A) of the TAct for approval of a negotiated Agreement. The Agreement does not appear to be discriminatory to any carrier not a party to the negotiations and is consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity. We will approve it on a nisi basis in order to provide any interested party an opportunity to submit comments or request a hearing pursuant to RSA 374:26.

We note that Conversent may purchase services or unbundled elements that may not be covered in this interconnection agreement from Verizon's Statement of Generally Available Terms (SGAT) and its subsequent revisions that is in effect per Order No. 22,692, subject to continued review pursuant to Section 252(f)(4) of the TAct.

In order to promote the continued growth of competitive telecommunications services in New Hampshire, we will require Conversent to comply with our notice requirements regarding Fresh Look opportunities. The recommended method for giving notice is to provide the Commission with a contemporaneous copy of the Confirmation of Code Activation form which is used to notify the North American Numbering Code Administrator.

As new competitors enter the telecommunications market, we recognize that New Hampshire's 603 area code

encounters greater and greater demand. Accordingly, we will require that Conversent request and use numbers responsibly and conservatively, and invite Conversent to explore alternative mechanisms to use existing numbers as efficiently as possible. In approving this Agreement, we require Conversent to comply with our orders on number conservation including Order No. 23,385 issued January 7, 2000, and Order No. 23,392 issued January 27, 2000, as well as further orders issued by the Commission concerning this matter.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED NISI, that the Interconnection Agreement negotiated between Conversent Communications of New Hampshire and Verizon New Hampshire is approved; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Conversent is required to comply with our Order No. 23,385 issued January 7, 2000, Order No. 23,392 issued January 27, 2000, and further orders issued by the Commission concerning number conservation; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Conversent is prohibited from placing any orders under this agreement and from otherwise doing business in New Hampshire until such time as Conversent has complied with all requirements of applicable federal and state law or regulation; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that Conversent will notify the

Commission within ten days of making their first facility-based commercial call in any exchange that has not already been opened to a "Fresh Look" opportunity as ordered in Docket DE 96-420; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Petitioner shall cause a copy of this Order Nisi to be published once in a statewide newspaper of general circulation, such publication to be no later than October 29, 2001 and to be documented by affidavit filed with this office on or before November 12, 2001; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that all persons interested in responding to this petition be notified that they may submit their comments or file a written request for a hearing on this matter before the Commission no later than November 8, 2001; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that this Order Nisi shall be effective November 19, 2001, unless the Commission provides otherwise in a supplemental order issued prior to the effective date.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this nineteenth day of October, 2001.

Thomas B. Getz
Chairman

Susan S. Geiger
Commissioner

Nancy Brockway
Commissioner

Attested by:

Claire D. DiCicco
Assistant Secretary